

Testimony in OPPOSITION to HB 5080 AAC DEER MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS ON PRIVATE PROPERTY AND AUTHORIZING BOW AND ARROW HUNTING ON PRIVATE PROPERTY ON SUNDAYS

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Dear Senator Meyer, Representative Gentile, and Honorable Members of the Environment Committee:

As an outdoor enthusiast and a DEEP Wildlife Rehabilitator, I cherish the serenity and beauty of the woods. Unfortunately, during hunting season, my opportunity to safely enjoy nature is greatly diminished. We, the 99% of non-hunters in Connecticut, must contend with bullets and arrows six days a week. Now, the 1 % hunting population, wants to deprive us of our one and only day of tranquility. It is unacceptable and undemocratic to further endanger the public simply to appease this *tiny* minority. The stipulation that Sunday hunting would remain on private property is meaningless – arrows and bullets know no boundaries. This places the general public, along with our pets and horses, in grave danger. We would now have to fear for our lives seven days a week.

It is scientifically inaccurate to suggest that expanding hunting will reduce the threat of Lyme disease or contain the deer population (Ostfeld, 2011 & Jordan, *et al*, 2007). Even the CDC does NOT recommend hunting to control Lyme disease because the removal of one large host will force ticks to move on to other large hosts, *i.e.*, humans and their pets. As far as deer population is concerned, the math is simple: the more you kill, the more will be born – nature abhors a vacuum and deer numbers routinely rebound after hunting season (also known as “bounce-back”).

In addition, bow hunting is particularly inhumane, with extremely high “crippling” rates regardless of the type of archery equipment used or the expertise of the hunter, around 46% (Gregory 2005, Nixon, *et al* 2001, etc.). Imagine the agony endured by an animal that slowly bleeds to death or eventually succumbs to an infection. A wounded animal that wanders off the “private property” would now surely die a prolonged, agonizing death.

In closing, hunters in Connecticut have four and a half months each year to hunt deer, six days a week. That is more than sufficient! The legislature needs to protect the rights of the majority – the non-hunting outdoor enthusiasts (who outnumber hunters 29 to 1). We hikers, dog walkers, and horseback riders also outspend hunters 7 to 1, thereby contributing far more to the state’s economy (USF&WS).

If the legislature allows this concession to hunters, next year they will demand Sunday hunting without any restrictions. This is unacceptable to the rest of us.

Thank you